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Summary record of the 39th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Yousfi ..... (Algeria)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

Strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations (A/61/531 and A/61/642)

Measures taken to improve the operational administration of existing cost-sharing arrangements for safety and security (A/61/223 and A/61/642)

Strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations: standardized access control (A/61/566 and A/61/642)

1. **Mr. Veness** (Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security), introducing the Secretary-General's reports on a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations (A/61/531), measures taken to improve the operational administration of existing cost-sharing arrangements for safety and security (A/61/223) and a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations: standardized access control (A/61/566), said that, since its establishment, the Department of Safety and Security had concentrated on three main areas of activity: recruitment; integration of the security management components of the former Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, the Security and Safety Service at Headquarters, services at offices away from Headquarters and the regional commissions, and the civilian security component of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; and the achievement of operational effectiveness through increased contact with host countries. In an effort to increase cooperation, he had intensified his contacts with Member States, both through their permanent missions to the United Nations and through direct contact with various responsible host-country authorities, and would be contacting all permanent missions in the near future to seek their assistance in implementing best-practice policies. He would also circulate security guidelines, as recommended by the Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute.

2. Significant achievements by the Department included more comprehensive briefing of all staff members; the successful negotiation and implementation of a security management accountability framework; advanced security training for all staff stationed in or travelling to a field location where a security phase was in effect; the provision of critical incident stress management through the Critical Incident Stress Management Unit; improved emergency response to natural disasters and humanitarian crises; and the integration of lessons learned from the 2004 tsunami.

3. Remaining challenges included improving vehicle safety; achieving greater gender parity; and addressing significant gaps in crisis management and surge capacity. With respect to gender parity, he had written to all Member States requesting their assistance in identifying and recruiting qualified women security officers; however, those efforts had not produced the desired results.

4. Financial, personnel and administrative integration also remained a challenge and different conditions of service of security officers in the field had become a contentious issue that affected morale and had the potential to degrade the integrated security management system.

5. Finally, it was regrettable that the issue of cost-sharing had led to a protracted budgetary debate. Although cost-sharing was necessary, it should be managed in a practical manner and should not divert attention away from the Department's primary mission.

6. Regarding the Secretary-General's report on a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations (A/61/531), he drew attention to the fact that several of the percentages of occupied posts in the section on recruitment were out of date; in fact, more recent statistics showed that significant improvements had been achieved across the board. With respect to the need for a strategic approach to security, the Department of Safety and Security was currently engaged in four projects: in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Sudan and, most recently, Somalia. Finally, the Department had developed a close working relationship with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with a view to ensuring effective crisis management.

7. Concerning the Secretary-General's report on a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations: standardized access control (A/61/566), it was vital that the security improvements which had been implemented at the Secretariat should be replicated at the offices away from Headquarters and the New York annex buildings.

8. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on measures taken to improve the operational administration of existing cost-sharing arrangements for safety and security (A/61/223), he said that the intentions expressed by Member States in the General Assembly concerning the development of a unified and integrated security management system often differed from those expressed within the governing bodies of the agencies, funds and programmes. It was regrettable that the World Bank had withheld its contribution; however, discussions between that organization and the High-level Committee on Management were ongoing.

9. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/61/642) in respect of the three reports of the Secretary-General (A/61/223, A/61/531 and A/61/566), said that the reclassification of the existing D-2 post of Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security should be considered in the context of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. The Advisory Committee had no objection to the proposed continuation of the D-2 position of Director, Headquarters Security and Safety Service, and recommended approval of the proposed conversion of the 134 temporary posts to established posts in the Security and Safety Services.

10. The Advisory Committee sought clarification as to why there were differences between the total compensation packages offered to Department of Safety and Security field security personnel by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and by the United Nations. The Advisory Committee also sought information on the implementation of security enhancement projects at all main United Nations duty stations. He understood that, since the time of writing, the requested information had been received and was available to the Fifth Committee.

11. With respect to cost-sharing arrangements, the United Nations Secretariat and United Nations organizations, funds and programmes shared a common responsibility for the security and safety of their staff and it was in their interest to provide adequate and assured funding for security.

12. Finally, the Advisory Committee had no objection to the Secretary-General's proposal that the General Assembly should approve the proposed course of action and authorize him to enter into commitments of approximately $20.2 million under the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, $1.5 million under the budget for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and some $2.0 million under the budget for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, to be reported on in the context of the respective second performance reports.

13. **Mr. Hussain** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, recalled that the General Assembly had requested, in its resolution 59/276, that the Secretary-General should submit several reports on the implementation of a unified and strengthened security management system in order to ensure the safety and security of United Nations staff, operations and premises at United Nations Headquarters and main duty stations, as well as in the field. He also recalled that the General Assembly had emphasized, in the same resolution, that the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of United Nations staff and premises rested with the host country. It was therefore imperative that Member States should be apprised of the status of formal arrangements between the United Nations and host countries.

14. The Group applauded the efforts of the Department of Safety and Security to establish a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations, as requested by the General Assembly; however, given that the level of risk and threat varied, it was necessary to set clear standards for risk and threat assessment and clear criteria for determining security needs, in order to justify additional requirements.

15. It was imperative to establish time frames for the completion of projects previously approved by the General Assembly. That fact should be borne in mind during future discussions on the implementation of the capital master plan, the proposed projects under the first phase of the standardized access control scheme and the proposed realignment of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It was also important to establish a comprehensive framework for the strengthening of the system-wide security management system, particularly in respect of the two phases of standardized access control, so that Member States could take informed decisions. The Group shared the Advisory Committee's views regarding standardized access control and underlined the importance of setting up effective measures to guarantee the highest level of protection of personal data available in the system.

16. Regarding the Secretary-General's report on a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations (A/61/531), the Group remained concerned at the high vacancy rate in the different divisions of the Department of Safety and Security and would welcome further information on both the current composition of the Department and the efforts being made to achieve greater geographical balance and gender parity.

17. Concerning the Secretary-General's report on measures taken to improve the operational administration of existing cost-sharing arrangements for safety and security (A/61/223), the Group shared the Advisory Committee's view that organizations participating in the United Nations security management system were responsible for paying their share of the costs. In that regard, the Group would welcome further information on the organizations that had refused to pay their share as well as the reasons for their position.

18. Finally, it was important to bear in mind that increased funding for safety and security should not jeopardize funding for other critical United Nations programmes and priorities.

19. **Mr. Fenchel** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and, in addition, Norway, said that the European Union welcomed the efforts of the Department of Safety and Security to provide safe working conditions in the Organization. However, it was concerned that the Committee's repeated deferral of its consideration of the item in the past might have put staff at risk. That regrettable delay must not continue, as safety and security were important in maintaining and enhancing the well-being and productivity of the staff. With the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its report (A/61/642) on the three reports of the Secretary-General relating to safety and security (A/61/223, A/61/531 and A/61/566), which the European Union supported, the Committee was in a good position to make progress.

20. Swift action must be taken to achieve the goal of complying with headquarters minimum operating security standards for perimeter protection and electronic access control. However, the European Union would like clarification of the financial resources needed to implement the first phase of the access control project and of the proposed conversion of Security and Safety Service temporary posts to established posts. Appreciating the efforts of the High-level Committee on Management and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network to further develop the existing cost-sharing arrangements, the European Union looked forward to hearing more about how the difficulties of the current system could be overcome.

21. **Mr. Ibsen** (United States of America) said that his delegation had always maintained that the Organization could not function effectively without safety and security provisions for its staff, and commended the Department of Safety and Security for its efforts to ensure a coherent, effective and timely response to threats and emergencies, establish a coordinated threat and risk assessment mechanism, develop and implement effective security policies and ensure that security personnel were used in the most cost-effective way. His delegation valued the efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to increase contacts with Member States and maintain a high level of direct involvement in operational matters in the field, and supported the proposed continuation of the D-2 position of Director, Headquarters Security and Safety Service, in order to provide and maintain a high level of direction, guidance and supervision in the Department.

22. Although 84 per cent of the Department's 1,830 posts were occupied, 99 security officer posts remained vacant and should be filled without compromising the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. As the development of a coordinated system-wide emergency response capacity would be a major undertaking for the Department, his delegation looked forward to receiving further details of the United Nations Crisis Operations Centre and the mandate of the small team formed to explore the benefits and implications of such a Centre.

23. His delegation hoped that implementation of the first phase of the standardized access control project would address the instances of insufficient security capacity pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General on a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations: standardized access control (A/61/566). It would seek further information on the specific proposals and action involved in the second phase of the standardized access

control project. Expressing support for the Department's efforts in general and the efforts to increase the headquarters minimum operating security standards in a way which satisfied the needs for cost efficiency and security effectiveness in particular, as well as recalling the Fifth Committee's role in overseeing security operations, his delegation hoped for speedy implementation of a number of the Department's proposals.

24. **Ms. Kaji** (Japan) said that the establishment of the Department of Safety and Security, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 59/276, had been an important step towards a unified, system-wide, security standard. While her delegation regretted that the report on the implementation of that resolution requested by the General Assembly originally for its sixtieth session had been deferred to the present session, it welcomed the information contained in that and the other reports before the Committee.

25. In connection with the review of posts in the Department, her delegation would like the Secretariat to clarify why the introduction of new technology had not led to fewer security officers being required, as it remained unconvinced by the number of posts referred to by the Advisory Committee in the annex to its report (A/61/642). Taking the view that the Committee must keep in mind the intended purpose of the performance reports, she agreed with the Advisory Committee that the reclassification of the post of Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security should be considered in the context of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

26. While her delegation agreed that the Department should gradually assume a leading role in crisis response, she would be interested to know the outcome of the Department's review of the operation of the interim team. She acknowledged the importance of compliance with the headquarters minimum operating security standards for perimeter protection and electronic access control, but would like more information regarding the planned second phase of the standardized access control project and the expected date of submission of the report on the matter, which the General Assembly was due to receive at its sixty-second session. Lastly, her delegation reiterated its support for the principle of sharing the costs of maintaining the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

Agenda item 124: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*) (A/62/34)

27. **Ms. Wynes** (Chairperson, Joint Inspection Unit) said that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had responded to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolutions 60/258 and 61/238 on JIU to continue to submit an advance copy of its programme of work to the General Assembly at the first part of its resumed session each year by revising and streamlining its annual planning process. As a result, it had approved a programme of work for 2007 at its December 2006 session, and was submitting to the Committee a single consolidated document containing its annual report for 2006 and its programme of work for 2007. Having finalized its programme of work early, JIU had been able to discuss its planned projects, which focused on management issues system-wide, with the Board of Auditors and with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Such discussion would be repeated periodically during the coming year to exchange information and prevent duplication and overlap.

28. Building on the previous work of the Unit, of OIOS and of the United Nations Development Group, reviews of common services would be undertaken for the United Nations Office at Nairobi and for regional commissions, including the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). As air services for organizations of the United Nations system were a special category of common services, JIU would examine the main provider in that field, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, operated by the World Food Programme, and, to a lesser degree, also the air services of peacekeeping missions.

29. It also proposed to review the use of corporate consultancies and corporate sponsoring, in order to identify opportunities and risks, determine best practices and further develop policies and standards, and planned to examine headquarters agreements and other host-country agreements to assess whether they were applied strictly and without discrimination against staff members or the Organizations which employed them. On the basis of past studies, including that of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, JIU would review in depth the relationship between the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resident Coordinators, with a view to clarifying their roles and functions and

contributing to a more effective United Nations management structure in the field.

30. As part of its series of reviews of management and administration in United Nations system organizations, JIU had included in its programme of work for 2007 reviews of the International Maritime Organization and World Tourism Organization. In the light of the General Assembly's request for JIU assistance in implementing resolution 61/159, on the composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, it had included in its programme of work a further review of that Office, focusing on funding and staffing issues. In view of widespread interest in the recruitment of junior Professionals to the Organization, JIU would review the national competitive examination, drawing on the experience of other organizations with similar examination systems.

31. Finally, the programme of work for 2007 was based on what JIU could reasonably expect to achieve with its resources. As the current staffing structure prevented optimal planning and implementation of projects, JIU had submitted, for the biennium 2008-2009, a proposal to convert two General Service posts to research officer posts. It believed that such a change would increase its productivity.

32. **Mr. Hussain** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group recognized the importance of JIU as the United Nations system's sole independent external oversight body. It had therefore taken an active part in the discussions leading to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/238. The readiness of JIU to respond to the reform process had been proved by its submission to the Committee of a programme of work for 2007 focusing on issues of system-wide interest, value and relevance from the point of view of efficiency and effectiveness. The Group looked forward to the results of the JIU reviews.

33. The Group commended JIU for promoting interaction with OIOS and the Board of Auditors in order to avoid duplication of effort and for its dialogue with oversight bodies in other organizations of the United Nations system. The early adoption of its programme of work had enabled it to discuss its proposed reviews at the tripartite meeting with the Board of Auditors and OIOS in December 2006. The Group took it that the General Assembly would simply take note of the JIU programme of work for 2007, as its role did not extend to reviewing or altering the programme. The Group indicated that it would consider favourably the JIU request for additional resources.

34. **Mr. Hillman** (United States of America) said that, by advancing its own planning process, JIU had reaped a number of behefits, including better coordination and information-sharing with other oversight bodies. A prime example was the opportunity to discuss the reviews proposed in its programme of work with the Board of Auditors and OIOS at the tripartite meeting held in December 2006. The efforts of JIU to strengthen follow-up to its recommendations, in keeping with General Assembly resolutions 60/258 and 61/238, were essential to ensuring that those recommendations resulted in greater efficiency, savings, coordination and accountability. His delegation looked forward to receiving further details of the benefits of implementing the recommendations fully in the JIU report expected at the sixty-second session.

35. Having noted with interest the proposed reviews of corporate sponsoring in organizations in the United Nations system and of management and administration in the World Tourism Organization, his delegation would like further information and clarification regarding the scope and objectives of the remaining proposed reviews, particularly those on common services at United Nations regional commissions, management and administration in the International Maritime Organization, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resident Coordinators, and common services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.